

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13097

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, TH, CH
SUBJ: SINO-THAI RELATIONS

1. WITH THE SUCCESSFUL STATE VISIT BY PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN TO THE PRC AND THE SIGNING OF TRADE AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS, THE STATUS OF SINO-THAI RELATIONS HAS RETURNED AT LEAST FOR A TIME TO THE NEAR EUPHORIC LEVEL THAT EXISTED AFTER THE INITIAL ESTABLISHMENT OF FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ALMOST THREE YEARS AGO. SINCE KRIANGSAK'S RETURN, HE AND PRC AMBASSADOR CH'AI TSE-MIN HAVE HOSTED DINNERS FOR EACH OTHER IN MUTUAL APPRECIATION OF THE SUCCESSFUL VISIT; AMBASSADOR CH'AI HAS PRESENTED FORMAL INVITATIONS FOR THE KING AND QUEEN TO VISIT THE PRC; THAILAND HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE PRC HAS REQUESTED AN EXCHANGE OF MILITARY ATTACHES; AND AT LEAST
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EIGHT THAI DELEGATIONS HAVE DEPARTED FOR THE PRC, MORE ARE PLANNED AND THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT THE PRC WILL BEGIN TO RECIPROCATE.

2. COMMENT: THE PRC WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HAVE A CULTURAL AGREEMENT, BUT THIS IS NOT LIKELY IN THE NEAR FUTURE AS IT WOULD OPEN THE RTG TO ADDITIONAL PRESSURE FROM THE

SOVIET UNION TO SIGN A LONG-PENDING CULTURAL AGREEMENT WITH THAILAND, SOMETHING THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS THUS FAR BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN RESISTING. IN ADDITION, BOTH THE CURRENT LEVEL OF THAI TRAVEL TO THE PRC (10,000 PERSONS IN 1977) AND THE NATURAL AFFINITY OF THE THAIS FOR THE CHINESE AS OPPOSED TO THE SOVIETS, MINIMIZE ANY REAL NEED FOR THE CHINESE TO HAVE A FORMAL CULTURAL AGREEMENT. ONE POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO A FORMAL AGREEMENT IS THE RECENTLY RECONSTITUTED THAI-CHINESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION WHICH HAS STATED THAT IT CONSIDERS ITSELF THE FOCAL POINT FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND HAS ACCORDINGLY REQUESTED AN EXHIBIT OF CHINESE ART. A PRC EMBOFF HAS RECENTLY STATED THAT THE PRC WOULD HOLD A TRADE FAIR OR AN ANTIQUE EXHIBITION IN THAILAND AT AN OPPORTUNE TIME.

3. CONCERNING THE ROYAL INVITATION, DOMESTIC SENSITIVITIES VIRTUALLY REQUIRE THAT EITHER CHAIRMAN HUA KUO-FENG OR DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TENG HSIAO-PING VISIT THAILAND BEFORE THE KING AND QUEEN GO TO CHINA. TO DO OTHERWISE MIGHT IMPLY A DEGREE OF THAI SUBSERVIENCE TO CHINA THAT WOULD NOT BE WELL ACCEPTED HERE. AS, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, TENG IS EXPECTED TO VISIT THAILAND THIS YEAR AND THE KING AND QUEEN HAVE BEEN INVITED "AT THEIR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE", IT APPEARS THIS POTENTIAL PROBLEM HAS BEEN AVOIDED.

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4. A SOVIET MILITARY ATTACHE HAS BEEN ASSIGNED IN BANGKOK SINCE DECEMBER, 1977, BUT THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS YET TO APPOINT AN ATTACHE TO MOSCOW. WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN INTENTION TO EXCHANGE ATTACHES WITH THE PRC, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT WILL SIMULTANEOUSLY ANNOUNCE THE APPOINTMENT OF ATTACHES TO BOTH MOSCOW AND PEKING IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
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